The Middlebury Campus

VOL. CXXII, No. 18 MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT, APRIL 10, 2025 middleburycampus.com

MIDDLEBURY SLASHES BUDGET BY OVER $10 MILLION, IMPOSES PARTIAL HIRING FREEZE

By HUGO ZHANG
News Editor

MAGGIE BRYAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Recent cuts to retirement benefits, a staff buyout program and a temporary hiring freeze all aim to correct chronic budget deficits.

The college announced a series of cost-saving measures on Wednesday, April 2 that aim to cut over $10 million from the annual budget through reducing staff and faculty benefits and permanently raising the student enrollment projection to 2,600–2,650. The college attributed the changes to 15 years of consistent deficits, culminating in the unexpectedly high $14.1 million shortfall this fiscal year, a large portion of which is due to lower enrollment at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS).

In its plan to improve the institution's financial health, the college will implement a voluntary early retirement incentive to eligible Vermont-based staff, reduce the maximum retirement match from 15% to 11% starting in 2026, and cut rental costs by relocating several Language Schools and administrative offices to Middlebury-owned properties. Additionally, Middlebury is evaluating its health insurance plans, with potential changes to be announced in the fall and implemented in 2026.

The college held a meeting for staff on April 7, with Wilson Hall filled by staff members uncertain about their future and asking senior administrators about the cuts. Interim President Steve Snyder told the crowd that laying off 140 employees would have accomplished a similar goal as these cuts, but they do not intend to pursue that path, according to publicly available meeting notes compiled by several Staff Council members on Monday.

The retirement buyout is aimed at reducing the workforce by 40–50 total staff; the incentive does not apply to faculty yet but administrators said that decision may be reassessed as Middlebury's financial future evolves. Six hundred and twenty-two staff members will be affected by the reduced retirement match, and 180 employees are eligible for the buyout, which is projected to save $2.5 million annually, according to the meeting notes.

The college has also announced its intention to reduce the number of people participating in the Senior Leadership Group from 17 members to just six, which it says will promote the administration's efficiency in

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College distributes information about potential for ICE agents on campus

By JULIA ROTH, MAGGIE BRYAN & ROSELLA GRAHAM
Contributing Writer, Senior News Editor & News Editor

The recent detention of over a dozen international students on college campuses across the country has raised concerns among students, faculty and staff about the potential appearance of U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on campus. Following these high-profile detention cases, on Monday, March 31, the administration created informative cards to be placed in buildings across campus, instructing readers of campus privacy protocols in case of the arrival of a law enforcement agent.

"No Middlebury employee is authorized to give identifiable information about students or employees to third parties, nor are they allowed to grant anyone permission to enter non-public spaces. All such requests, including warrants and subpoenas, should be directed to the Office of General Counsel for legal review or permission," the cards read.

The cards also include phone numbers for both Public Safety and the Office of the General Counsel, directing anyone dealing with immigration enforcement to these departments as the first points of contact.

The cards do not mention ICE explicitly, but according to Natalie Steen, assistant director for Legal Risk Management and Contracting, faculty questions about what to do in case of the potential appearance of ICE officers on campus inspired the distribution of the cards, which aim to serve as a "cheat sheet" for community members.

"The cards were made because we heard from colleagues (faculty and others) that they were not sure what to do in the event someone came into class and was disruptive or indicated they had a warrant for a particular student or colleague. So, we distributed the cards as a helpful reminder of our long standing policies," Steen wrote in an email to The Campus.

Steen also said that the custodial staff was responsible for distributing the cards throughout classrooms and dining halls on campus.

On Tuesday, April 1, Middlebury held a Q&A open to faculty and staff with an immigration lawyer, andOn Tuesday, April 1, Middlebury held a Q&A open to faculty and staff with an immigration lawyer, and the administration plans to host a webinar for concerned students on Monday, April 14 at 4 p.m. with Dan Berger, a partner at Green & Spiegel in Rhode Island.

April 7, the college joined an amicus brief filed by the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education & Immigration to side with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Middle East Studies Association. The lawsuit challenges the detainment and deportations of the past few weeks, and joining the brief signals Middlebury's support for protecting international students

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'Hands Off!': Vermonters demonstrate against Trump administration in Vergennes

WAKE UP!
ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT FASCIST LIARS
TRUTH
HANDS OFF!! our constitution, courts and country
HANDS OFF NOAA
NOT MY PRESIDENT
NOT MY VALUES
NOT MY VOICE
NOT MY BELIEFS
NOT AMERICAN!

NOOR KHAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Hundreds of protestors gathered in Vergenne, Vt. on Saturday as a part of the nationwide "Hands off!" movement to protest against the Trump administration for a myriad of different reasons.

By NOOR KHAN
Layout Editor

On Saturday, April 5, an estimated 400 people gathered in downtown Vergennes along Main Street outside City Park as part of the approximately 1,300 nationwide Hands Off! protests against the Trump administration. Beginning around noon, the protest lasted roughly two hours through wind and rain. At its peak, protesters spread across Main Street and the intersection at North Green Street and Green Street. The protest was planned concurrently with other Hands Off! protests throughout Vermont, with an estimated 10,000 in attendance at the Montpelier, Vt. protest. The local chapter of the progressive Indivisible movement placed attendance in Brattleboro, Vt. at

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FEDERAL SCRUTINY OVER COLLEGE'S ANTISEMITISM COMPLAINTS RENEWED

By IZZY RONDA
Local Editor

ABBIE CHANG/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The original StandWithUs complaint alleging an unsafe environment for Jewish students at Middlebury has received renewed attention by the Trump administration.

Middlebury College was one of 60 colleges and universities that received a letter from the Trump administration on Monday, March 10 informing the school that prior allegations of antisemitism on campus would be reinvestigated. The renewed scrutiny on the institution's treatment of Jewish students comes after a Title VI investigation was opened over a year ago following a complaint filed with the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education.

The department threatened to carry out "potential enforcement actions if [universities] do not fulfill their obligations under Title VI," citing the need to guarantee Jewish students equal access to campus buildings and educational opportunities, according to a press release from Department of Education Secretary Linda McMahon last month.

The college stated it would take all possible measures to comply with the renewed inquiry.

"In March of this year, we were among 60 schools that received a follow-up letter saying the investigation would be revisited. We will continue to cooperate with OCR. We are committed to our educational mission, and that includes supporting all students with no tolerance for discriminatory behavior on our campuses," a college spokesperson wrote in a statement to The Campus.

The most recent letter follows the original complaint, which was filed on Feb. 16, 2024 by the StandWithUs Center for Legal Justice with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). This complaint claimed that Middlebury College violated its obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a statute passed to foster an educational environment that is free from discrimination.

StandWithUs defines themselves as "an international, non-partisan education organization that supports Israel and fights antisemitism," according to the organization's website. Their complaint addressed claims of on-campus antisemitism at colleges across the country under Title VI.

"[Title VI] prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance," the U.S.

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SCOTT LECTURE SERIES HIGHLIGHTS RISE OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM IN U.S.

COURTESY PHOTO/ MARGARET DEFOOR

Journalist Katherine Stewart spoke to students, faculty and community members in jointly-hosted Rohatyn Center and Department of Religion talk on Thursday, April 3. Her new book, "Money, Lies, and God" was released in February.

By EVAN WEISS
News Editor

This April, Middlebury's Department of Religion is hosting a four-part lecture series on Christian nationalism, bringing journalists, Christian ethicists and scholars of religion to campus. The first two lectures focused on the implications of this movement for American democracy and how social media has platformed and shifted Christian nationalist messaging.

The lecture series, which is funded through the department's endowed Charles P. Scott Fund, opened on Thursday, April 3 with a talk by journalist and author Katherine Stewart. She spoke about her most recent book "Money, Lies, and God: Inside the Movement to Destroy American Democracy" and the current political landscape in the U.S. in relation to Christian nationalism.

After describing President Trump's various attacks on American democracy over the past two months, Stewart drew parallels between three of his administration's defining strategies — fighting a war on the truth, institutionalizing corruption and posturing as tough — to the anti-democratic political movement.

While she said this trend has been growing in the U.S. for decades, it has only recently assumed executive power under the new administration. And while many of its policy goals are not religious in nature, the movement — and now Trump — derives much of its support from the Christian nationalist voter bloc.

"The most important thing to understand is that this movement is not particularly rational or coherent," Stewart said. "They're motivated more by what they want to destroy rather than what they want to create.

Stewart spoke about the Trump administration's attacks on the education system and targeting of universities as part of a larger campaign to erode democracy.

"Democracy relies on specialized knowledge to function. The current administration understands intuitively that specialized knowledge, rational thinking, is inimical to dictatorial power, so they've set about destroying centers of expertise both inside and outside of government. A disinformed public — an irrational public — is easier to control," she said. "Again, quite simply, they understand that truth is their enemy."

Stewart ended her talk on a note of hope, informing attendees of ways to counter both the anti-democratic and Christian nationalist movements using democratic means.

"There is no substitute for turning out the vote," Stewart said. "Tell people that voting matters. Tell people that democracy is theirs if they can keep it." After that, she recommends that people become involved in local politics and support democracy-building organizations.

Stewart's talk, also presented by the Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs, was followed by a Q&A with three Rohatyn Global Fellows. Referencing Stewart's engagements with Christian nationalists while reporting on their movement, Rohatyn fellow Rowan Cleary '27 asked, "Have you ever changed someone's mind? And, how do we?"

Stewart replied that as a journalist, she is not there to change peoples' minds. She also sees other forms of action as more productive in terms of shifting democratic power.

"It's worth having those conversations, trying to find common ground… But I also think some of that energy would often be better spent motivating people who didn't bother to vote in the last election, or holding people who would like to vote accountable," Stewart said.

Professor of Religion James Calvin Davis helped organize the April lecture series and explained how understanding the Christian nationalist movement is fundamental to understanding how religion influences American public discourse and how this is not the only Christian perspective.

"As people who study religion, we should be talking about this instance of the relevance of religion to American public life. But also we should be talking about it in a way to help students distinguish between this particular co-opting of religion and the diversity within the Christian tradition that it is co-opting," Davis said.

The series' second lecture was hosted on Monday, April 7 by Professor of Christian Ethics at Columbia Theological Seminary Mark Douglas, who discussed how the rise of social media has reshaped the Christian nationalist movement. Although many regular churchgoers hold Christian nationalist viewpoints, many of them derive their viewpoints from influences outside the church, especially from social media.

Citing political scientist Dannagal Goldthwaite Young's research, Douglas explained the unique space that social media provides the Christian nationalist movement to hone and broadcast its message.

"The people most likely to consume fringe political content on social media are highly engaged and highly politically partisan," Douglas said. "As a right-leaning and right-directing phenomenon, contemporary U.S. Christian nationalism benefits from the trends toward both extremism and asymmetry that are arising out of society's wider use of social media."

Douglas then drew on the story of Protestant reformer John Calvin to find present-day strategies for combating the chaos of social media. He emphasized the power of media platforms to facilitate previously unthought-of connections and build on humanity's natural socialization.

"One of the goods implicit in social media is that it builds relationships," Douglas said. He proposed that building these relationships across social and political boundaries can foster understanding, not just polarization. "Maybe social media might, over time, and through its chaos, also shape us toward empathy."

Social media, and our engagement and complicity with it, is inevitable, Douglas argued. But what we do with this complicity is up to us.

"Rather than treat complicity as something to avoid or to purify oneself from, treat complicity as something from which to learn, something through which we might discover how to love God and love neighbor. And in doing so, we may discover that the best way to relate to others — to love our neighbors, even our Christian nationalist neighbors — is to recognize what we share with them rather than what makes us better than them," he explained.

The Scott Lecture Series will continue on April 17, with a visit from Daniel Miller, professor of Humanities at Landmark College, who will offer a queer take on Christian nationalism. The series will conclude on April 28 with a lecture by R. Ward Holder, associate professor of Theology at St. Anselm College, who will offer a Christian perspective on the subject.

College faces federal scrutiny on antisemitism

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Department of Justice's website states.

The letter from StandWithUs claimed that Middlebury College's administration had cultivated an antisemitic atmosphere on campus. The letter's claims have not been independently verified nor have they been validated by either Middlebury College or the Department of Education.

"Middlebury's administration has failed to remediate these issues and, to the contrary, has contributed to this climate though its inaction, refusal to enforce its own policies, dismissiveness towards Jewish students' concerns, and lack of equal treatment of its Jewish students as compared with other minority groups on campus," the initial letter stated.

StandWithUs urged the targeted colleges and universities to maintain freedom of expression and to reject "baseless calls to investigate or punish international and immigrant communities for exercising their fundamental rights."

Addressing incidents at Middlebury specifically, the complaint from StandWithUs presented a list of alleged evidence against the college's administration, including assertions that administrators denied recognition to a second Jewish identity-based club Chabad that would have existed in addition to Middlebury Hillel.

"Just this month, on February 2nd, 2024, the 'Student Organization Registration Committee' ('Committee'), which includes faculty liaisons, emailed the Jewish student applying for Chapped student organization recognition that their student club has been rejected yet again," StandWithUs wrote. "We request that OCR investigate why Middlebury continuously rejects jewish students' requests for recognition of an alternative Jewish student organization, Chabad, and treats those requests differently than requests from other groups for such recognition."

In response to the proposed forming of Chabad, the college stated that their rejection of this secondary Jewish-student organization was due to funding issues, expressing their concern that the funding request for food replicates programming already funded and offered by Hillel for Shabad dinners.

The report also alleged that the college took "retaliatory disciplinary action" against a Jewish student who reported a resident advisor (RA) for posting the slogan "'From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free,'" as reported by VTDigger. That claim could not be independently verified.

Furthermore, the original letter stated that Middlebury administrators requested that student organizers "universalize" a vigil following the October 7, 2023 attacks, urging them honor both Israeli and Palestinian lives while instructing them not to display Israeli flags or Jewish symbols at the event.

StandWithUs bases its claims against the college on the U.S. Department of State's definition of antisemitism.

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities," as stated on the Department's website.

According to the college, Middlebury administrators have addressed both the original letter as well as the most recent reminder sent from the OCR; they acknowledge that the investigation is an ongoing process, yet are unable to speak openly due to legal restrictions.

Concern over ICE presence on campus inspires "cheat sheets" for students and faculty

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studying in the U.S.

The creation of the cards was met with mixed reactions among international students, inspiring both reassurance and frustration. One international student who asked to remain anonymous expressed a desire for the college to take a more aggressive stance.

"I have seen the cards, I think they make the situation more real," the student said. "I'm glad that Middlebury has responded in some way to explain what's going on, but I do wish they provided more information on what students can do to protect themselves personally from law enforcement or from anyone who comes in. Because it seems like they're just taking a very passive stance where as a school they can't really do anything to protect themselves."

A faculty member who asked to remain anonymous said that they had not seen any informational cards placed in the rooms they teach but thought it was a good idea to provide such a summary. The professor added that they recently reminded students in their classes that college classrooms are private spaces that law enforcement cannot enter without a warrant.

"I haven't addressed the cards specifically (because there are no cards to address), but I have discussed the changing landscape of immigration enforcement as it intersects with academic speech rights," the professor wrote in an email to The Campus.

Middlebury is not alone in confronting international students' concerns. Tufts University recently released a statement in support of an international graduate student, Rümeysa Öztürk, who was taken into custody off the street by the Department of Homeland Security. The State Department terminated Öztürk's visa, though Tufts University President Sunil Kumar asserted that she was in good standing with the college and the law.

ICE is currently detaining Öztürk, along with at least a dozen other students and scholars, at a detention center in Louisiana after a flight departing from Burlington airport. Many of those detained have been granted the right to live in the U.S either as a permanent resident or through a work or student visa. Some of the individuals have engaged in some form of pro-Palestinian political activism, prompting ICE to justify the deportations on the grounds of their alleged sympathizing with foreign terrorist groups such as Hamas.

The anonymous professor stated that in the current political climate, it is essential for members of the college community to be aware of their legal rights and obligations in order to protect themselves.

"I think it is crucial that faculty, staff, and students know our rights, and that we do our very best to defend those rights as they come under assault by an administration that is pushing to illegalize speech as a means of illegalizing persons," the professor wrote. "Faculty working conditions, which include the quality of academic freedom we enjoy, are student learning conditions, and vice versa."

Editor's Note: Editor in Chief Ryan McElroy '25 contributed reporting to this article.

MEET THE SGA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

By **ABHIR SURI**
Contributing Writer

Middlebury is gearing up for its Student Government Association (SGA) presidential election scheduled for Monday, April 14. The student body faces an important decision among three capable and motivated candidates: Nicole Meyers '26.5, Tony Wang '26 and Islam Abushareah '26.5. Each candidate has outlined unique visions and policies aimed at enhancing campus life and ensuring that student concerns remain at the forefront of the administration's agenda.

Islam Abushareah '26.5

Islam Abushareah is a candidate deeply engaged in campus life, advocating strongly for increased transparency and responsive governance within the SGA. His active participation in various campus initiatives underscores his commitment to community-oriented leadership. Abushareah aims to address both academic and social challenges comprehensively, prioritizing student welfare and inclusive representation within the college administration.

Central to his campaign is a commitment to ongoing dialogue between students and their representatives.

"We need continuous and meaningful dialogue between students and their elected representatives," Abushareah said, emphasising the importance of active student involvement in governance.

His platform includes proposals aimed at enhancing student resources and addressing campus-wide issues holistically, ensuring that all students feel supported academically and socially.

Abushareah places a particular emphasis on inclusivity and student wellness, aiming to create a campus environment where all students have equal access to resources and opportunities. He intends to implement policies that foster greater campus unity, thereby enhancing student satisfaction and community spirit.

Nicole Meyers '26.5

Nicole Meyers, originally from San Diego, Calif., now considers Victoria, British Columbia home. Meyers is a Literary Studies major with a minor in Classics, and currently serves as the SGA Health and Wellness Director. During her tenure, she has contributed to improving student dining experiences through collaborative events such as the Future of Dining. Meyers also promotes student wellness education, participating in Fresh Check Day and Safer Medication Disposal Day.

Meyers' governing philosophy centers around transforming student feedback into concrete institutional change.

"I am passionate about turning conversations with students into actionable policy," she said in an interview with The Campus, indicating her commitment to responsive leadership.

Her proposals include enhancing dining hall offerings, establishing online booking systems for appointments with Deans and Health Center services and increasing accessibility to the Snow Bowl. Meyers is also focused on community engagement, proposing social initiatives for winter months to bolster campus connections.

Top to bottom: Islam Abushareah '26.5, Nicole Meyers '26.5 and Tony Wang '26.

"My vision for Middlebury includes ample spaces for community connection," she said, reflecting her broader goal of fostering inclusivity and student well-being.

Tony Wang '26

Tony Wang, who hails from Southern California, brings a diverse educational background, including attendance at a boarding school on the East Coast. Currently balancing his commitments as a varsity athlete on both the football and track teams, Wang is dedicated to demonstrating leadership through service and engagement. Wang highlighted his commitment in an email to The Campus.

"I hope to bring the best I can for you guys, the pillars of Middlebury College," he wrote.

His campaign focuses heavily on improving student experiences through increased funding for campus activities, such as enhancing the scale and quality of traditional events, including the Spring Formal and Spring Concert. Additionally, Wang wants to address the distinct needs of international and first-generation students, promising targeted support to ease their transition into college life.

He said that he recognizes existing divisions within the student body, especially between athlete and non-athlete communities and is committed to bridging this divide. Wang's practical proposals extend to campus logistics, such as advocating for student access to faculty parking during evening hours.

Editors from The Campus will moderate a debate between the three candidates and their vice presidents on Friday, April 11 from 5–7 p.m. on the stage in the Grille. By hearing from these contenders on specific issues directly, spectators will have the opportunity to decide for themselves whose policies and visions resonate the most.

Happy Voting, Panthers!

PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE
April 11th, @5-7
Grille Stage
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

MIDDLEBURY SLASHES BUDGET BY OVER $10 MILLION, IMPOSES PARTIAL HIRING FREEZE

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the coming months.

Vice President for Human Resources Caitlin Goss emphasized that participation in the retirement incentive program is entirely voluntary for employees.

"This is a choice that is completely voluntary, so everyone who is eligible receives all the information, and people can take it or not," she said in an interview with The Campus. Goss added that they have reached out to all supervisors with eligible employees to ensure the managers are informed and not improperly influencing people's decisions.

Colleen Norden, president of Staff Council and a systems and communications specialist, said that college employees were frustrated by the recent cuts to their benefits.

"Staff are unhappy about this change because some of them are close to retirement," Norden explained. "We're still getting the same paychecks, but what happens is now that four percent piece that used to go into our retirement account won't be, so the overall compensation is decreased."

Norden added that while the college is seen as a good employer by many — the institution did not institute layoffs during Covid-19, she said — and correcting budget deficits is important, many staff feel like these cuts portray them as a financial liability, rather than as an asset.

"We had retirement incentives twice before, we had workforce planning, but we're back here again," she said. "Staff want a real solution, and they really want [the college] to be able to make changes institutionally that are sustainable and structurally sound so that we don't have to face this again in the near term."

Terry Simpkins, the library's director of Discovery and Access Services, also felt that the college was placing a higher burden on staff members through the cuts.

"[Administrators] are planning to bring the Bennington Language Schools in the summer back to Middlebury, and there are, for many of us, cutting retirement, so I'm effectively working for less money," Simpkins said. "This means workload is going to go up and my salary is going to go down, which will certainly have an impact on morale."

The Trump administration's cuts to higher education have played a role in the college's calculus on its finances. Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration David Provost stated that the recent federal policies add more risk to the financial health of Middlebury, adding that the finance team is monitoring these risks daily.

However, the potential tax increase on endowment under consideration by the Trump administration may harm what Provost said was the backbone of Middlebury's finances.

"Last year, the endowment tax was 1.4%. That charge to Middlebury was $1.2 million," he said. "If it went from 1.4% to 14%, that's 10 times — so $1.2 million would have been a $12 million impact on the endowment; If it went to 21%, you're talking $24–25 million."

The college has also placed a temporary pause on some hiring this semester, according to Goss, the head of Human Resources. She said the freeze is intended to affect open positions that could be paused with minimal impact on students and that would not have been filled this semester anyways.

"We likely would not have been able to realistically hire individuals to fill those roles and to start prior to the end of the spring semester, so we could afford to pause those and come back to them in July and determine what the next step is," Goss told The Campus.

The hiring pause has created disruption among some departments that are understaffed and were in the process of hiring new team members last week before the temporary freeze was announced.

Alyssa Wright, director of Research, Instruction and Data Services, shared in an interview with The Campus that the research team is supposed to include six librarians — which she said is an average number for NESCAC schools — but Middlebury currently has only four.

"They were active searches — we were in the second round interview for the instructional media librarian. I had to cancel interviews, and the second one, we were reviewing CVs. Both had very healthy applicant pools," Wright said. "It's disappointing to have that pause to have to cancel interviews and send regrets to all of those candidates."

Davis Family Library has faced chronic understaffing and turnover in recent years, leading the research librarians to take on heavier workloads and longer hours. The concern for the research team at Davis specifically is that their unique positions require special skill sets that are difficult to recruit, magnifying the impact of even a temporary freeze.

"It takes a long time to hire librarians because they're academic positions, so you have to have an academic skill set, and they have to have some more practical skill sets," Wright added.

The hiring was paused until July 15 due to changes in the budget, according to Simpkins.

"I just don't understand how, on the one hand, [the administration] can say 'We don't want to negatively impact the students' learning experience' and on the other hand, they can say, 'We have to pause the librarian searches'," he told The Campus.

The recent changes to retirement benefits and plan to review healthcare packages has also impacted faculty, who discussed the reforms last Friday at the monthly faculty meeting. Faculty Council member and Professor of Political Science Bert Johnson said that increased class sizes during Covid-19 placed heavier burdens on professors, and the expected post-pandemic return to normal is now out of reach.

"We were at 2,500 [students] before Covid, I feel like we thought that worked pretty well, and I thought a lot of us felt like we were going to eventually get back to that number," Johnson said. "So to hear that we're at this higher level perpetually without an additional infusion of resources does make us sort of adjust our perspective in how we think about planning courses and other kinds of things."

According to Provost, the vice president of finance, the college currently enrolls around 2,600 students on campus, making the new enrollment projection a continuation of the status quo rather than an increase in size.

"Historically, the numbers pre-Covid always hovered just shy of 2,600," he said. "This isn't an increase. It stabilizes us back to where we were."

Administrators have previously told The Campus that the ideal enrollment range was 2,500 to 2,600 students on campus; enrollment spiked to well over 2,800 students in 2021 in the wake of Covid-19. Provost added that the changes be gradually phased in, blending enrollment for each year group increases from 700 to 720 over time to ensure a more manageable and sustainable transition.

"Student financial aid, federal aid is about $16.7 million. That is Pell Grants, [Supplemental Educational Opportunity] grants, work-study grants, and parent loans — guaranteed parent loans. So if we were to lose that money, that would be a real problem," he said. Provost clarified that all federally-funded financial aid for this academic year has already been applied.

Provost also shared that the college relies on approximately $15 million in federal grants, the majority of which go to Monterey. He estimated that the Vermont campus relies on about $2–3 million in federal grants for summer research and faculty research projects. The Campus has previously reported that over $6 million in total research grants on the Vermont campus from the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation could be affected by federal cuts.

Regarding the Institute, Provost acknowledged that the graduate school's financial challenges are real. Middlebury is closely monitoring international student policies, as half of the Institute's student body is composed of international students.

Apart from policies, one of the Institute's biggest programs, Translation and Interpretation, is currently impacted by artificial intelligence (A.I,), which Provost said will only create more challenges for the program.

Reflecting on the changes to retirement benefits and health insurance, Johnson shared that fellow faculty members expressed mixed emotions since the announcement last week.

"For some people, it's anger; for some people, it's exhaustion, with continual focus on tightening belts," he said. "Whe we came to these jobs, because we valued education, we valued the mission, we valued the student experience, and when we can't do the best possible job of that for resource reasons, it's frustrating."

For the retirement match reduction, Goss shared that the Human Resources team will provide access to the TIAA specialists, referring to an external company available to employees through the college for retirement and investment advising. She said that since the change will not go into effect until January 2026, there is enough time for staff to plan ahead.

"This does not change the ability of an individual to make an individual decision to put more of their money into their retirement plan," Provost clarified.

In light of all the recent changes to staff benefits and retirement, Simpkins reflected on how he has seen the college's support for staff and library has changed over the past two decades.

"Middlebury is a terrific place, it's a top-notch college, it's relatively well-supported, and we're relatively well-paid," he said. "[But] what I've seen over 25 years is sort of a steady degradation in some of the perks that staff would get that made it a place that people wanted to come to."

Despite the challenges posed by the new austerity measures, Johnson understood that it must be a tough decision for the administrators.

"I do not envy the senior leadership group having to make decisions," he added. "But, we also need to convey how it affects us."

TEDxMiddlebury speakers “Test the Waters”

By SARAH LI
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTOS / ANDY GOBIN

The 10-student TEDx board and the four speakers for this year’s event in Robinson Hall.

TEDxMiddlebury returned to the Mahaney Arts Center Concert Hall last Saturday, April 5 with a series of thought-provoking talks guided by this year’s theme: “Testing the Waters.” The event featured five speakers whose stories explored personal identity, creative reinvention, language, leadership and resilience. Topics ranged from pastry schools to the halls of Congress, and the speakers invited the audience to consider what it means to take risks and embrace change.

TEDx events are independently organized under the license of the TED organization and follow the format of a TED conference, where speakers deliver speeches related to a central theme. This year’s event was led by a 10-student board who have worked on planning, promoting and then executing the event since the fall.

The event opened with Akshata Nayak, founder of the publishing company Little Patakha, who explored the lack of diversity in children’s literature. She discussed how children are more likely to see animals than ethnically diverse human characters in books, and that boys are usually portrayed as physically capable while girls rely on magic to save the day. Nayak’s company aims to change that narrative.

Next, Caroline Corrente, founder of Haymaker Bun Company, shared her journey of persistence through multiple professional pivots. Having walked away from careers in global development and affordable housing to pursue a passion for pastry, Caroline spoke candidly about the highs and lows of entrepreneurship while caring for a family.

“My husband is still asking [me] the same question: What do I want? The only answer I know is this — I’ll keep fighting until I can’t, and then I’ll pivot,” Corrente said in her talk.

Jenna Tang, a Taiwanese-American translator, reflected on how learning languages shaped her understanding of home, identity and belonging. Initially forced to study languages as a child because of her uncommon dialect, she later found joy and connection through learning German, Spanish and French. She also spoke to how colonial histories intertwine with language and how multilingualism can offer new ways of seeing the world. Her presentation resonated with Middlebury students who are passionate about language learning.

In a deeply personal talk, Brooke Mumbi ’26 recalled her experience with religious expression and identity. Growing up in Kenya, Mumbi struggled with maintaining her sense of self in school at United World Colleges (UWC), where wearing her head wrap was not allowed. She eventually reclaimed her autonomy through self-discovery and exposure to new communities.

The event concluded with Rep. Becca Balint, Vermont’s first woman and openly gay person elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Balint spoke on the concept of moral courage — the kind of bravery that shows up when standing up for what’s right is hard, risky or uncomfortable.

“Democracy doesn’t survive on autopilot,” she told the crowd. “It depends on each of us holding it together. That takes courage — and it’s not rewarded nearly enough.”

Balint’s talk was equal parts personal and political. She shared the story of comforting a grieving mother during Covid-19 and reminded the audience that vulnerability and bravery are inseparable.

Shea Brams ’26, a member of the student board organizing the event, commented on the organizing team’s cohesion this year.

“In a year where most of the board were new to TEDx, it was really moving to watch how the board came together, learned quickly, and made something special happen,” Brams said.

Heather Neuwirth Lovejoy ’08, director of the Innovation Hub, which oversees TEDxMiddlebury, echoed Brams’s statement.

“[The student board] supported each other through every challenge — from choosing the theme to recruiting speakers, managing travel logistics, and bringing everything to life,” Neuwirth Lovejoy wrote in an email to The Campus. “We don’t script anything for them. They choose the theme, the speakers, the branding, the messaging — everything. Our job is to support their vision, not direct it.”

After several years of disruption to TedXMiddlebury due to the Covid-19 pandemic — which restricted seating and necessitated virtual formats and alternative venues — this year marked its return to Robinson Hall, where the event could once again be held in front of a large audience with professional-grade production.

“This was a big comeback moment,” Ziying Jian ’27, another student board member, said in an interview with The Campus. “The theme, ‘Testing the Waters,’ really resonated not just with our speakers, but with us as planners too — it captured the vulnerability, the courage and the experimentation behind every story told that day.”

Looking back on TEDxMiddlebury 2025, the theme captured more than a collection of talks — it represented an ethos of trying, risking and transforming. Whether facing questions of identity, redefining home, launching a business or stepping into public office, each speaker asked the audience to consider: What happens when you wade into uncertainty with curiosity, hope and courage?

Brooke Mumbi ’26 (left) and U.S Rep. Becca Balint (right) were two of the event’s four speakers.

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‘Hands Off’: Vermonters demonstrate against Trump administration in Vergennes

Continued from Page 1

around 1,500.

The protest served as an opportunity for people to come together and rally against what they have found most frustrating about the administration’s work. When asked what brought them to the protest, each protestor cited a myriad of reasons.

“You name it. Good grief, every day it’s like 10 different things,” said Ted Tighe, a Vermonter of 50 years and Middlebury resident.

This sentiment was reflected in the handmade signs protesters held up, which demanded that the government “keep their hands off” of American allies, free speech, national parks and more. One protester placed a sign at the bottom of the U.S. veteran tribute in City Park, calling for government “hands off” of “Veterans”, “Medicare” and more. One protestor’s sign featured a design she has been working on — “ENF,” standing for “Enough.” A Starksboro, Vt. resident carried a sign that simply read “Stop the coup.”

“I tried to think of all the things — ‘hands off this,’ ‘hands off that’ — and then it was just too many,” said the Starksboro resident, who asked to remain anonymous. “So I realized, this said it all.”

Protestors demonstrated their spirit with continuous cheering that swelled each time a passing car or truck honked. Some drivers passed by the stretch of protesters multiple times, riding their horns.

Police at the Vergennes protest asked demonstrators to move off the City Park green onto the sidewalk because they had not obtained a permit for the protest.

Several protesters shared that the arrest of Tufts University graduate student Rumeysa Ozturk by federal agents gave them a shock that spurred them into action. Middlebury resident Carla Tighe carried a sign that read: “Rumeysa Öztürk. handsoff2025.com.”

“[Öztürk’s arrest] starts a weird precedent of people in plainclothes being able to kidnap people off the street in broad daylight and just say that they’re ICE, even if they don’t show any identification,” Vergennes resident Meghan Brumback told The Campus. “That’s really scary, even as a citizen, to have no due process.”

Others were driven by a concern for younger generations. One of several families at the Vergennes protest with young children, David Small ’09.5 and Abigail Blum ’08.5 brought their child, who carried a sign labeled “Toddlers Against Tyranny.” Small shared that they came to the protest because they wanted to be an active part of ensuring their son’s future.

“It’s important for him to see this — he’s been chanting ‘Don’t tread on my trains’ all morning,” Small said. “He’s a big Amtrak guy, loves watching the trains go by.”

Addison County State Senator Ruth Hardy was also in attendance, conversing with community members. She told The Campus that she was there both as a senator supporting her constituents and a participant.

“I feel the same as everybody else — I’m concerned, I’m worried, I’m scared about what’s happening to our country, to our rights,” Hardy said. “I want to speak up and be part of the resistance to the actions of the Trump administration and their impact on Vermont.”

As a member of the State Senate, Hardy has seen the impact of the Trump administration’s funding cuts as the State Senate legislates the budget and responds to federal funding cuts for vaccines, local food-purchasing and humanities programs, among others. She anticipates that Vermonters will be particularly hit by tariffs against Canada since as its neighbor, Vermont relies on Canada for tourism and trade.

“The state legislature right now is trying to figure out how to plug these holes and we just, as a small state, will not be able to. Vermonters across the board will be impacted by the federal cuts,” Hardy said.

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Vergennes residents David Small ’09.5 and Abigail Blum ’08.5 with their child, who had been carrying a sign that read “Toddlers Against Tyranny”.

Hardy and Small both expressed desires for the college to not “preemptively cave” to the pressures of the Trump administration, with Small pointing to the college’s near $1.6 billion endowment as a means of doing so. Other community members were particularly concerned for the welfare of the college’s international students.

“Middlebury College is part of my district and the students are my constituents, and I’m concerned for them, and I want to make sure that our college is keeping all [students] safe,” Hardy said.

According to the Vergennes resident who first posted about the protest on Front Porch Forum (FPF), 100 people had expressed interest in attending on the platform as of Friday. The company Mobilize placed the Vergennes protest on the Hands Off! map to increase visibility.

“The 100 people who signed up to come could be coming with 100 different reasons, but it doesn’t matter. This is a slash-and-burn administration, you know?” the Vergennes resident said. “They’re trying to tear down the fabric of the whole culture to destroy, destroy, destroy, and then build it up in whatever image they want.”

There was no one organizer for the Vergennes protest: the Vergennes resident emphasized that there were no designated speakers or plans.

“I’m not trying to make it anything. I just started it. But I’m not trying to own it, you know? It’s grown very organically,” they said.

The protest grew beyond FPF, both through the mailing list of local Indivisible chapters and through word of mouth.

Numerous protesters expressed fears about being targeted by the government for taking a stand, both for their safety and their desire to protest in the future. Two shared that they hoped to go to Canada later in the year, but were nervous about being let back into the country despite holding U.S. passports.

“We’re just two steps away from them arresting citizens,” said a Middlebury resident who wished to remain anonymous, referencing Öztürk’s arrest.

Despite these fears, those same people plan on continuing to demonstrate. One protester mentioned planning to attend the protests on Saturday, April 12 against the loss of funding at Bixby Library in Vergennes. A group of protesters emphasized the importance of demonstrating against the current administration as a sustained effort.

“It’s a marathon, not a sprint,” the anonymous Vergennes protester said.

Editor’s Note: Addison County State Senator Ruth Hardy is married to Professor of Film and Media Studies Jason Mittell, who serves as faculty adviser to The Campus. He had no role in the publication of this article.

BRISTOL MOVES FORWARD WITH NEW SKATEPARK PROJECT

By ARIELLA FROMMER
Contributing Writer

After 25 years of local skaters practicing their flips and kicks turns in a skatepark with simple wooden and metal features, the town of Bristol, Vt. is fundraising to start construction on a new and improved 12,000-square-foot concrete skatepark.

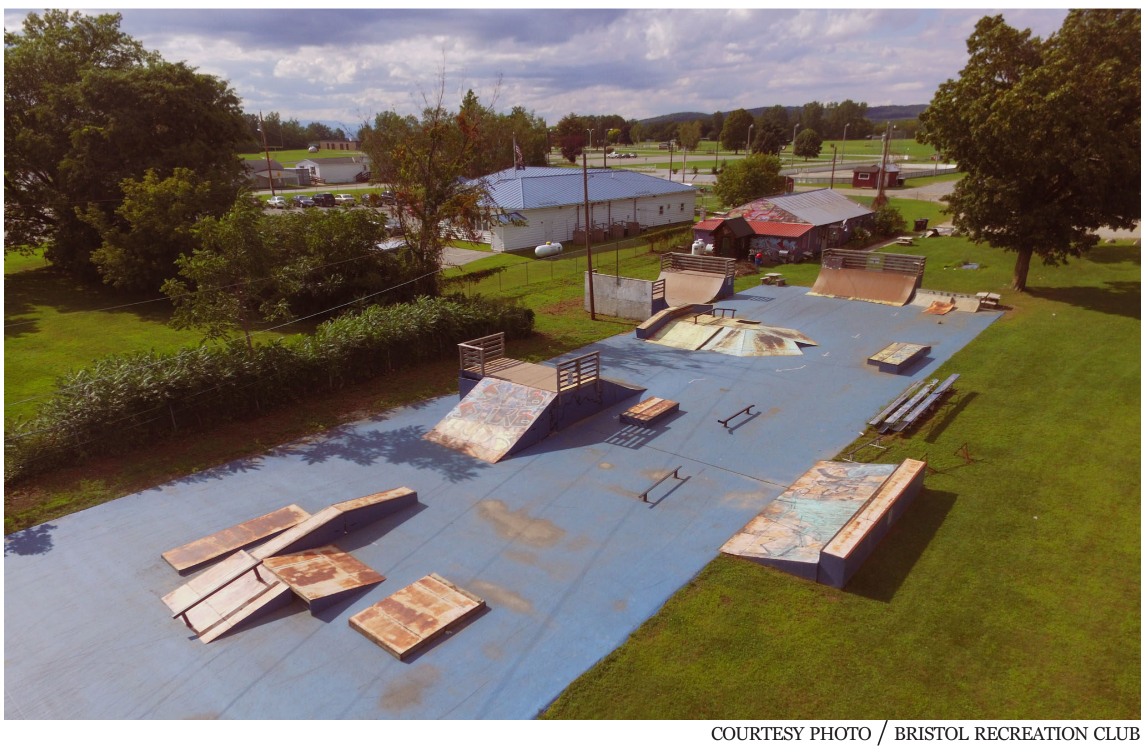
The town hired Nor’Easter Skatepark — a New-England based skatepark design and construction company — to design the space, and composition plans for the park are nearly finalized. According to Taylor Welch-Plante, the leader of the project through her role as director of The Bristol Hub, the next step is to produce construction documents and to fundraise for the project’s costs. Nor’Easter Skatepark hosted a skatepark design meeting on April 3 at The Bristol Hub Teen Center to share their progress with interested community members.

Welch-Plante said that the wooden park was originally designed as a temporary structure, offering a lower-cost alternative to concrete. However, wood is less durable and safe. A concrete park has always been the long-term goal, and momentum to install one surged during the Covid-19 pandemic, as locals came to realize the importance of accessible outdoor community spaces.

Following a community input process prompted by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, residents voted to prioritize skatepark renovations. The town allocated $140,000 to the effort and in February 2024, the community decided to move forth with a concrete skatepark.

“This changed the price tag significantly,” Welche-Plante said. “But it results in a much more solid art piece for the community that generations forward will be able to enjoy.”

The town applied for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a Vermont state fund, and grants from several nonprofits and corporations. Depending on how much money the town receives in grants, they will need to fundraise between $200,000 to $700,000 to meet a total cost estimated at around $800,000.



COURTESY PHOTO / BRISTOL RECREATION CLUB

The current skate park in Bristol, which will be renovated with more durable, concerte equipment.

Construction will not begin until next summer, at the earliest.

“I’m pretty optimistic, I think there’s a fantastic amount of momentum and community support, and people who are eager to throw benefits and seek donations,” Welche-Plante said.

The skatepark will have banks, bowl features, half-pipes and rails. Accessibility is a key part of the design because Welch-Plante wants the park to be approachable to all participants.

“More advanced people can make a challenging feature by trying a harder trick or giving it more speed, but it’s hard to make an advanced feature be accessible for beginners,” Welch-Plante explained.

Bristol’s current skatepark was built in 2000 and has undergone several transformations since then. Before its construction, youth skated on the roads and sidewalks in town, raising safety concerns from local pedestrians, businesses and the skaters themselves. Local business owners pushed for the creation of a space where teens could skateboard freely. After receiving seed money from several businesses and grants, the skatepark was created, composed of an asphalt base with wood and steel structures. The park expanded in 2011 to add new features, but many of its structures have since required rebuilding or demolishment due to rot.

Welch-Plante hopes the new skatepark will draw people to Addison County. In light of the new Middlebury skatepark, Bristol is excited for the parks to highlight the area as a location to explore action sports.

Skateboarding, in addition to being a physical outlet, has its own culture, Welch-Plante said. For people who do not connect with traditional sports, skateparks can be welcoming “third” space to find community.

Scootering has become especially popular at the skatepark because it is the most accessible of skating options, reducing the barrier to entering using the space, according to Welch-Plante. The hub provides scooters and helmets for youth who want to explore the skatepark but are not looking to commit to the steep learning curve of skateboarding.

“The skatepark is a prime example of that space where families and community members can gather and participate in this fun recreational space,” Welch-Plante said.

Editor’s Note: Managing Editor Madeleine Kaptein ’25.5 contributed reporting to this article.

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NICOLE MEYERS '26.5 FOR SGA PRESIDENT

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

We are excited to announce our endorsement of Nicole Meyers '26.5 to serve as the next Student Government Association (SGA) President. Meyers has a composed demeanor and realistic vision for the student body next year. With the intention to appoint well-spoken Anina Dentel-Pham '27 and thoughtful Anna Miller '26 as her vice presidents, we believe this trio is best-suited to represent the student body.

The Campus spent 30 minutes with Meyers' team on Sunday night, in addition to a similar meeting held with one of her opponents, Islam Abushareah '26.5 and his vice presidential candidates, Nathan Sammons '27 and Thalía Cerda '27. We also extended an invitation to Tony Wang '26 — the third candidate in this race and only contender with no prior SGA experience — who chose not to speak with us.

Our endorsement plays no role in The Campus' reporting on the presidential election; we are committed to objective journalism in our newsroom and fact-checked arguments in our opinions section.

Following our discussions, the Editorial Board endorsed Nicole Meyers as a seasoned SGA member with a compelling reason to run and a 10-point plan on how to get things done. Her platform is measured and achievable, presenting students with a reasonable list of goals to work through next year. We noted Meyers' emphasis on soliciting student feedback, which will help her team stay grounded in improving the day-to-day student experience.

Meyers' proposals for increasing accessible transportation around campus and during breaks are feasible measures that will have an outsized impact. Her plan to increase accessibility to the Snow Bowl, the Center for Health and Wellness, and our class Deans was notable, too. The student experience is top of mind for Meyers, and it shows.

Her vice presidents were impressive in their own right. Dentel-Pham's experience as SGA senator and her determined attitude — we saw her carefully noting our questions on prepared Post-It notes — works well on this team. Miller is capable too: their insightful answers about mental health on campus and the importance of reclaiming community spaces brought a compassionate, intelligent perspective to Meyers' ticket.

Several of our editors abstained in our final vote, remarking that none of the candidates this year have the energy and vigor necessary to accomplish significant change at the college. We agreed that all three contenders need to bring more urgency to their campaigns — even Meyers sounded unsure about a few pressing concerns, such as whether or not she would raise questions about the recent budget cuts to the Board of Trustees.

Some of her broader policies need rethinking as well. It's hard to feel inspired to vote for someone based on minor tweaks to the student experience such as signs in the Grille or student feedback on dining when so many feel Middlebury has settled into self-inflicted institutional decline in recent years. Meyers needs more fire in her policies and in her campaign.

The SGA presidential election is usually an exercise in compromise; most recent candidates have been neither visionary changemakers nor firebrand reformers. Such is the nature of student government. Meyers, Dentel-Pham and Miller have the most potential to grow into their roles next year.

As for the other candidates, we thought Islam Abushareah had some compelling ideas, specifically his admirable intention to stage a student referendum on the financial drain caused by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS). Although such a decision on Monterey rests with the Board of Trustees, we need an SGA president willing to stand up to Middlebury's most powerful leaders — a principle that the other two candidates should incorporate into their campaigns.

But we kept coming back to one question: Why is Abushareah running to be president?

The current Feb Senator and Speaker of the Senate has abundant experience, but he could not respond when asked why he wanted to be president, only repeating that he felt it was "the next step in the ladder." Furthermore, Abushareah's dubious plan to be president while studying abroad in Jordan in the fall is likely to stall SGA's momentum on key issues. Although their plan is flawed, Cerda's passion for supporting younger students and fighting to increase budgets of departments such as the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) made her stand out to us as a noteworthy candidate in her own right.

One aspect we admired in Meyers' trio and found lacking in Abushareah's was their teamwork. Meyers, Dentel-Pham and Miller had a shared vision of the school that emphasized community-building and realistic goals. They come off as poised, competent and coordinated — even their outfits matched. Meanwhile, Abushareah's team seem to disagree on basic principles for SGA bureaucracy, raising questions about their ability to collaborate next year.

Now, let's address the elephant in the room — or rather, the one who wasn't there at all. Tony Wang's inability to attend a 30-minute meeting he previously agreed to raises serious doubts in our minds about his candidacy and the sincerity of his campaign.

His written candidate statement did nothing to assuage our concerns, either: personable yet bland, unspecific and uninspired, it is the exact opposite of what students should look for in a president. Moreover, Wang's specific policy points seem inflammatory and poorly conceived. Opening faculty and staff parking spots to students after 5 p.m. is a laughable solution to a serious problem, and why would "new donor outreach methods" ever be the prerogative of the SGA president?

Ultimately, the SGA presidential election should rest on the goals of the candidates and their ability to execute those plans. In our interviews, we found just one candidate whose ideas and effectiveness stood up to our scrutiny.

So, when you go to cast your vote next Monday, April 14, we urge you to vote for Nicole Meyers as a competent, steady hand to lead the Student Government Association next year.

THE MIDDLEBURY APPROVED CAMPUS

Why Middlebury should care about the Red Cross in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Op-Ed

***Alem Hadzic** is a member of the class of 2026.*

When I arrived at Middlebury College in the fall of 2022, I never thought that I would run a half marathon, organize a fundraising soccer tournament or raise over $3,500 in just three weeks for a humanitarian organization that is over 4,000 miles away. However, that is exactly what I am doing because some causes are personal, and some moments demand more than thought: they demand action. Please consider helping us reach our $10,000 fundraising goal by May by attending our upcoming soccer tournament (details coming soon) and donating to the GoFundMe.

This is why I am running the 2025 Royal Bank of Canada Brooklyn Half Marathon and organizing an on-campus soccer tournament open to all students, faculty and staff to raise money for the Red Cross of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (RCFBiH). All proceeds from these events will go directly towards my fundraiser, where they will support emergency response efforts, disaster relief and essential health services in one of the most historically war-torn regions in Europe. By being the first member of the Bosnian diaspora to ever launch a fundraising campaign for the RCFBiH, this campaign is highly significant to our community abroad.

Now you might ask, "Hey Alem, why are you doing this?" The short answer to that question is that I am a Bosnian American and that my parents were refugees of the Bosnian War, where they were forced to flee the only home they had ever known and come to the United States in the 1990s. My parents' resilience shaped me and developed my interest to help my community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though the country is far away, the history remains rooted in my family's story and in my identity.

I am also initiating this campaign because Bosnia still experiences the scars of war and constantly faces humanitarian challenges. The RCFBiH always shows up to meet those challenges head-on. I formed my campaign out of a belief that identity can and should be a powerful engine for change.

But why should Middlebury care? Our community should be invested in this campaign as this isn't just about Bosnia and Herzegovina: it is about what change can be made when a student is able to take a personal initiative and transform it into something purposeful. This campaign models youth activism that engages communities. Middlebury preaches being citizens of the world, fighting for social justice and turning theories into practice. This campaign embodies these characteristics, and the traction we have seen so far demonstrates that values discussed in classrooms can truly inspire real changes.

The core motivation behind my fundraising campaign isn't just monetary but also involves emotional and cross-cultural influences. It's building momentum here on our campus, social media and within news outlets across the U.S. and Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. If you would be interested in following this campaign, follow my journey on Instagram (@ alemm.mh). You will be able to see updates on my half marathon training, tournament details and behind-the-scenes content that show how one student is able to make a difference in the lives of others.

MIDDLEBURY
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COURTESY PHOTO / ALEM FADZIC

Hadzic is currently raising $10,000 for the Red Cross of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina through an on-campus soccer tournament and running a half marathon.

The on-campus soccer tournament symbolizes my initiative. The beautiful game actively unites people across Bosnia and Herzegovina. By bringing together Middlebury students, staff and faculty around this event, we can replicate this spirit of solidarity from Bosnia and Herzegovina here in Vermont. The tournament is open to all, regardless of experience and is meant to bring our community together for a great cause. Snacks and drinks will be provided courtesy of the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and its Mini-Grant program. Participants will pay a registration fee, and 100% of the proceeds will go directly to the organization to help serve people in need. Just like soccer, this is a team effort, and every bit of support counts.

Being the first to do something is truly an honor — but I don't want to be the last. I hope that this campaign can inspire other students at Middlebury to take initiatives they care about and say, "I can make change, too." Regardless of your background and identity, there is space for your voice and a need for your action. This campaign shows that you don't have to wait until you graduate to do meaningful work. You can start now.

This fundraiser revolves around turning identity into impact. It is about showing how big change starts small, which in this case is with a half marathon, a soccer match and a GoFundMe link. I'm asking the Middlebury community to care. We should care about Bosnia and Herzegovina, about using our stories as strength, and to show up, donate or spread the word for important initiatives started by students.

The Middlebury Campus

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The Middlebury Campus

MIDDLEBURY PANICS AS TRUMP ROLLS THE DICE ON TARIFFS

Op-Ed

***Joe Gerebi** is a member of the class of 2027.*

COURTESY PHOTO / THE WHITE HOUSE

President Donald Trump imposed a range of tariffs on U.S. trading partners on April 2, which he labled "Liberation Day."

If you're anything like me, you've watched what little you have invested in the stock market shrink dramatically over the past week. Turmoil has rocked U.S. markets as President Trump rolled out a sweeping set of tariffs — most notably the "Liberation Day" tariffs announced on April 2. The result? A massive equity selloff, trillions in market value wiped out in days and the U.S. entering bear market territory for the first time since 2022.

In conversations with friends and in class discussions, it seems everyone has something to say about the tariffs — and none of it is good. Whether it's frustration over falling stock prices, anxiety about a potential recession, or the breakdown of global relationships, the general belief around campus is that Trump's tariff policy is reckless and harmful.

With so much criticism flying around, I couldn't help but wonder: why would the administration double down on tariffs — and in such a bold, all-out fashion?

So, just playing devil's advocate here, maybe there's more to it than we think.

Let's start with the debt. Tariffs are essentially a tax on imports and they generate billions in federal revenue — without raising income taxes. This is appealing at a time when the U.S. is staring down a $36 trillion debt mountain.

But it's not just about revenue. About one-third of U.S. marketable debt will mature within the next year and will need to be refinanced. If interest rates fall, the government could save hundreds of billions in interest payments.

This is where tariffs come in. In response to the policy announcements, U.S. Treasury yields have dropped as investors flee equities and hide in the safety of government bonds. That demand pushes bond prices up and yields down, making it cheaper for the government to borrow money. In other words, a market downturn might actually give the government the breathing room it needs to refinance debt at lower rates, potentially saving trillions and reinforcing confidence in U.S. assets. At the same time, the Federal Reserve might feel more comfortable cutting short-term interest rates, further easing borrowing costs. It's a risky play — but arguably a strategic one.

Another explanation for the aggressive approach is Trump's push to revitalize U.S. manufacturing. According to Oxford Economics, tariffs raise the cost of foreign goods, making domestic products more competitive and nudging consumers toward U.S.-made options. But companies won't relocate unless they believe the tariffs are here to stay. Acting early and forcefully might be the only way to compel them — especially if they expect the next administration could reverse course.

There's also a national security angle, particularly when considering China. Covid-19 exposed how vulnerable our global supply chains are, and in the event of a major conflict or catastrophe, relying on foreign suppliers could have serious consequences. The new policy also directly targets Chinese chemical firms tied to the export of fentanyl precursors — the ingredients fueling a drug crisis that's devastated communities across America. In a situation where diplomacy has fallen short, tariffs serve as a tool to apply pressure.

Finally, there's the trade fairness argument. The United States operates at a $1.2 trillion trade deficit. Many countries impose tariffs or regulations that make it hard for U.S. businesses to compete abroad, such as India's 100% tariff on U.S. agricultural products. Trump's tariffs are being pitched as a way to level the playing field, pressure trade partners to negotiate, and secure fairer treatment for U.S. exports. According to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, 70 countries have contacted the White House to begin talks since the implementation of the "Liberation Day" tariffs.

Now, all of that might sound reasonable in theory, but here at Middlebury, it just feels like pain.

Students and faculty here are deeply connected to the global economy. We study abroad, rely on imported goods and pursue careers in fields that depend on open markets. Tariffs seem like a step backward, and they're hitting our portfolios hard.

But here's the thing: most Americans have minimal involvement in the stock market — the wealthiest 10% of households own approximately 93% of its value. So while some of us might feel the sting, many Americans haven't been directly affected, at least not yet.

Ultimately, whether Trump's tariff push is a master plan to tame the debt, reignite American industry, protect the homeland, or upend the global trade order, one thing's clear — it's a high-stakes gamble with uncertain intentions and unpredictable consequences.

Will it work? Honestly, who knows. There are plenty of downsides and reasons to be hesitant, but bold policies often have effects we don't immediately see — especially from where we sit at Middlebury. Since Middlebury students are so exposed to the downsides of tariffs through market losses and global tension, it's easy to miss any potential upside. I believe that at a minimum, it is important for our community to understand both sides of this tariff debate.

WHAT MIDDLEBURY'S BUDGET CUTS REALLY MEAN FOR THE FACULTY AND STAFF WHO CLEAN UP AFTER YOU

Op-Ed

***Lily Buren** is a member of the class of 2026.*

COURTESY PHOTO / LILY BUREN

A broken champagne bottle left discarded for staff to pick up on McCullough lawn last Sunday. Recent budget cuts have raised questions about whether the institution views staff as an asset or a liability.

When I worked for Middlebury's Office of Advancement, I routinely ended alumni donation calls with: "As a student on financial aid, I thank you for your donation — it really helps to make the Middlebury experience possible for students like me." But those calls made me think: Who else makes Middlebury possible?

The answer is simple: the staff who clean up the remnants of late-night parties, the public safety officer who once retrieved my forgotten Babar-print tote from the Athletic Center at an ungodly hour, or the line cook who makes the Wednesday morning quiches that motivate me to roll out of bed.

Last Wednesday, Middlebury announced its plan to offer early retirement to Vermont-based employees over the age of 55 with at least 10 years of employment, among other cost-saving measures. While this may appear generous, it raises deeper questions about who we value on this campus and who becomes dispensable when numbers are tight.

First, it encourages the departure of staff with deep institutional knowledge — the dining worker who remembers your allergies, the custodian who helps a student find a lost heirloom, or the landscaper who knows when Battell Beach will flood or when to bring in the Adirondack chairs before the first frost.

Second, those leaving will likely be replaced by lower-paid hires or student workers, who cost less and don't receive benefits. That's not just cost-cutting — it's a quiet restructuring of labor.

Third, the policy excludes younger long-term employees. Someone who's worked here for 20 years but is only 40 years old won't qualify yet will still lose access to key benefits they were promised, such as the 15% retirement match.

And perhaps most importantly, there's something less tangible but no less important at stake: care. This isn't just about a few positions. It includes everyone outside of professors, coaches, and senior administrators: Student Activities Organization directors, chefs, Public Safety officers and more. These people being pushed out are often the staff most invested in the well-being of students because they've built relationships over years or even decades. If we lose these employees, we don't just lose labor: we lose an essential part of our community.

That 15% retirement match? It's being reduced to 11% for employees hired before 2017. The college says this figure remains "among the best of our peers," but the cut disproportionately impacts lower-paid employees. Meanwhile, in the 2021 fiscal year, then-President Laurie Patton earned over $646,936 in salary and benefits. As cuts are rolled out, we need to be honest about who truly bears the cost.

We're also in the middle of the largest fundraising campaign in Middlebury history. What if even a fraction of that effort was devoted to the workers who've carried this place through every snowstorm, construction project and commencement?

Other cost-saving measures seem simple at first glance. Middlebury plans to reduce external lease costs by relocating the Arabic, Italian, and Portuguese Language Schools from Bennington College to the main campus by summer 2027. The Office of Advancement will also move into college-owned space at Marble Works. On the surface, these are straightforward real estate decisions. But what they save in rent, they may cost in labor strain, particularly for facilities staff who will have to adjust accordingly.

Relocating the Language Schools means a greater number of students and faculty will be on campus during the summer months, increasing demand on dining, custodial and maintenance crews, who already carry a significant load. But here's the catch: If the college is simultaneously reducing its full-time workforce through retirement incentives and replacing longtime staff with temporary summer hires, two things become likely.

First, there will be an increase in short-term or less experienced workers (like local high schoolers or college students) who do not benefit from the institutional knowledge accumulated over years of working here. Second, the remaining year-round staff will face even greater pressure to keep up, especially during the transition period between summer programs and the start of the academic year.

The plan to raise enrollment projections to between 2,600 and 2,650 students, without a proportionate increase in faculty or staff, raises similar questions — more students, fewer resources — and quietly, more pressure to admit wealthier applicants. Middlebury's need-blind model only works if enough full-pay students are enrolled to offset those receiving financial aid. But the median family income of a student here is $244,300, and 76% come from the top 20% of earners, according to the New York Times. Just 46% of students are on any financial aid, a decrease from 51% of students in past years. If that trend continues, we risk reinforcing economic exclusivity — not because lower-income students are less qualified, but because they're more expensive to admit. That's not access, that's branding.

Rising healthcare costs don't affect everyone equally. If Middlebury raises premiums or cuts benefits, lower-wage workers will feel it most. Many earn just enough to be ineligible for Medicaid — eligibility ends at $30,120, while a Grade 1 worker earns $37,835. That's too much for aid but too little for comfort.

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) is often blamed for the institution's budget issues, but its role in the college's global network is overlooked. While studying abroad at Sciences Po Bordeaux, I met students who will study at MIIS next year, paying only their French tuition. That same partnership lets undergraduate Middlebury students study in Bordeaux. MIIS hosts international exchanges that the Vermont campus can't supply, quietly bridging programs and partnerships in ways that most don't realize.

Not everything I've said will lead to immediate administrative change, but it might spark conversation, and that's a start. What if we launched a fund not just "For Every Future," but for the people who make the college's future possible?

Alumni should be more than willing to contribute to a fund that offsets healthcare premiums, supplements retirement contributions, or provides emergency relief for the very workers who supported them as students.

What if we also reimagined how we use our existing spaces? Bread Loaf, for example, sits largely empty outside of the summer months. Rather than scaling back international programs or closing off Monterey, we could relocate select programs there. We could host MIIS fellows, international exchange students or even summer language programs, creating vibrant, year-round opportunities for cross-cultural learning without building new infrastructure. And then there's compensation. It's time to take a hard look at how salary cuts and benefit reductions are distributed. During financial crises, some university presidents at other institutions have dramatically reduced their own pay or even foregone salaries altogether. It's a public gesture, yes — but also a powerful one. It sends a message that leadership is willing to shoulder real responsibility alongside everyone else. Why shouldn't we expect the same here?

If sacrifice is required, it should be shared. That includes administrators. That includes top earners. Faculty, too, are wondering where they fit into all this; many assume these new policies will affect them as well, and that assumption isn't unfounded. The saddest part is that faculty have grown used to being underpaid compared to administrative leadership, and they rarely push back successfully. They stay because they care, unlike some administrators who learn to care about students in abstract terms, through data, initiatives or optics. They teach us, mentor us, write our recommendations, challenge us, and cheer for us. That kind of connection is what quietly and consistently holds this place together.

Middlebury has long been proud of its values, community, care, and curiosity. But if we truly want to live up to them, we can't keep cutting the people who bring those values to life. We have the resources, the space and the alumni base to do better. What we need now is the willpower to do it.

FACULTY SHOW EXPLORES CATHOLIC SCHOOL WITH A TWIST

By CHRISTY LIANG
Staff Writer

Religious guilt, complex identities and the power of female friendship illuminated the Wright Theatre stage this past weekend in “The Virtuous Fall of the Girls from Our Lady of Sorrows.” The play was directed by Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Sheila Bandyopadhyay and ran from April 3—5.

Written by Gina Femiam in 2019, the play is set in an all-girls Brooklyn Catholic school, where a theatre production — a subversive sequel to Shakespeare’s 1604 play “Measure for Measure” — brings together a group of seemingly archetypal, but deeply revealing characters in dramatic and thought-provoking ways.

The girls live in an overtly religious and confining environment where swearing is frowned upon, sexual desire is cast as sinful and homosexuality is unthinkably taboo. Set in the aftermath of 9/11, Minnie (Virginia Frau ’27) and Dove (Sarah Caire Fong-Yan ’28) grapple with the tragic loss of their Father. Imogene (Payton Rice ’28) resists Sister Ignatius (Victoria Fischer Luksch)’s denouncement of her lesbian identity as unnatural; Jenny (Ella Juhl ’28) struggles to come to terms with her pansexuality as she falls in love with Immogen, her best friend; Maxx (Yoyo Zhang ’28) is an outspokenly bisexual rebel subverting all rules and conventions; Mathilda (Nonna Madoyan ’28), who believes in God, embarks on a tumultuous journey of self-discovery amidst newfound female camaraderie.

Mundane moments of school life are portrayed with humor, empathy and just the right amount of drama. Characters rise above their representative archetypes, reverberating deeper human struggles. I particularly loved the moments when the girls’ interiority seeps through the surface of normalcy, their humanity overtaking the oppressive religious doctrine. In one such moment, Jenny is shaken by how much substance and life there is inside an earthworm after having to cut one open in her Biology class. “They can love! They can double love!” She exclaims. This moment is both funny and poignant as it opens our eyes to the immensities within a miniscule organism — a metaphor for all that goes unnoticed, unappreciated and swept under the carpet in our grander, human lives.

In a conversation with The Campus, Juhl expressed the difficulty of bringing to life her character Jenny’s thoughtfulness amid her seemingly mindless bubbly energy. Jenny, unlike most other characters, does not get much time to directly showcase her inner life to the audience. But during the earthworm moment, we see her unadulterated enthusiasm for life and fascination with its myriad forms. Her sharpness, though coated in a seemingly simplistic ebullience, comes through unexpectedly and refreshingly.

“Another great learning point for me is to allow for the character to take over what I want, to focus on telling the story rather than on how I’m performing and being perceived by the audience. Each audience laughs at a different part of the monologue, so there is a build up of expectation in that sense, which is what I’m trying to relinquish so as to become a better vehicle of the story,” Juhl said.

Madoyan, who played Mathilda, began to fully embody her character, so much so that she started to unconsciously think and act from her character’s perspective. As the most contradictory and repressed character in the play, Mathilda is outspokenly Christian and feels her world shaken by the subversive attitudes of her peers. Taking the Bible as the absolute truth, she reveres Sister Ignatius, who represents a devout Christian ideal in the play.

“I didn’t initially find Mathilda to be a strong character because of how easily she’s influenced by other people. It’s as if she lacked a backbone,” Madoyan shared in an interview with The Campus. “But my understanding of her greatly changed throughout the process of embodying her. She has strong principles and always goes with what she thinks is right, but she’s also able to venture out of her comfort zone,” she added.

Madoyan revealed an imaginative understanding of Mathilda’s life and the extent of her emotional struggle beyond the scope of the script and directorial intent. Mathilda, who has a long history of self-harm, typically must wear long sleeves to communicate to the audience her discomfort with revealing certain parts of her body. Through Madoyan’s work in embodying this character, she learned the power of subtlety in storytelling.

“I don’t think it’s noticeable to the audience, but throughout the performance, I would always tug at my sleeve end whenever I get anxious or had to raise my hand. In this sense, it has become something overarching that is always on my mind. [I went] from not noticing it in the script to being constantly and fully aware of how I’m interacting with my sleeve,” Madoyan said.

The play ends with the enactment of Minnie (Frau)’s theatre production — set in hell — where each character exclaims “I am not a sin!” Mathilda’s notable absence, however, cracks this seemingly satisfactory ending where teenage girls embrace their humanity and vocally rebel against their conservative environment.

In the lecture following Friday night’s performance, Bandyopadhyay shared that Mathilda’s rejection of the play is more truthful to her character development, and that the play’s ending might very well signify the beginning of her individual journey. Madoyan also pointed out the original line in the script which reads: “Mathilda reads the play and walks away, and that’s okay.”

Indeed, it is this self-acceptance that underscores the play’s circuitous nature; each girl experiences personal rises and falls when their morality is challenged by the world around them. What Shakespeare writes in “Measure for Measure” echoes this very sentiment; “Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall.”

Editor’s Note: Virginia Frau ’27 is an Arts & Culture Editor for The Campus.

COURTESY PHOTOS /CLINTON BRANDHAGEN

“The Virtuous Fall of the Girls from Our Lady of Sorrows” ran from April 3-5 in Wright Theatre.

REMEMBERING SPORTS AND CELEBRATING WRMC’S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

By MAYA ALEXANDER
Opinions Editor

WRMC hosted its annual “Sepomana Spring Concert” in Wilson Hall on Saturday, April 5. In light of WRMC’s 75th anniversary, the concert featured Middlebury student band Soop Spoons and American indie rock band Remember Sports from Philadelphia.

Soop Spoons (Dermot McMillan ’25, Aidan McMillan ’25, Samantha-Grey Solomon ’25, Annalise Johnson ’25.5 and special guest Eleanor Sterling ’25 who stood in for and Tulip Larson ’25) opened with folk acoustics. Glistening under red, orange and yellow lights, the performance marked one of their final shows during their time at Middlebury. The band played a mix of covers and original songs, radiating a warm, intimate energy for their audience, which included some of their family members.

The group of five started playing music together during the first two weeks of their first year. After playing one concert together at Wednesday Night Open Mic Party (WOMP), the band never stopped. Now, they perform all over the community, from the Middlebury Farmers Market to the Snowbowl.

McMillan, one of the vocalists and guitarists, recounted the story of how the band got the opening gig. This past February, WRMC hosted its first “Battle of the Bands” event, where eight student bands performed. Afterward, audience members voted on who they deemed the winner — the final prize was granted to Soop Spoons, giving them the opportunity to open at the Sepomana Spring Concert.

“It’s cool to get some recognition from WRMC,” McMillan said.

After Soop Spoon’s wholesome performance, Remember Sports came on stage, dazzling the crowd with electrifying pop-rock melodies, while embodying the indie tones that were reminiscent of Soop Spoon’s show. It was the first time they had been on stage in a year and a half, and their second time performing at Middlebury since the fall of 2017. Some of their set even featured songs they have never performed live before.

Similarly to Soop Spoons, Remember Sports started off as a student band at Kenyon College in 2012. Between their songs, the band members interacted with the crowd of students, family members and alumni who had returned for the weekend celebration of WRMC’s anniversary, recounting the previous time they performed at Middlebury in 2016.

Front person and primary songwriter Carmen Perry’s captivating vocals had the crowd jumping and swinging to a fast paced tempo. Her gritty vocals blended perfectly with the raw, energetic instrumentals, bringing a smile to all of my friends’ faces.

The event was organized by WRMC concert directors Tasha Deen ’25 and Cali Jantzen ’25 with the help of Technology Coordinator for Student Activities Sam Hurlburt.

Remember Sports has been one of Janzten’s favorite bands since she started listening to them in high school, so she was honored to be able to bring them to Middlebury.

“They just announced a couple months ago their first tour in a while, where they’d be starting on the East Coast. I reached out to their management kind of on a whim after buying my tickets for their Massachusetts show, seeing if they’d want to play the week before the tour started at Middlebury. And they did, which was awesome,” Jantzen said in an interview with The Campus.

WRMC music director Neel Shah ’26 reflected on how he is grateful to be able to watch live music at Middlebury.

“I think it’s always really special to have live music come to campus. It’s something sometimes we take for granted, but then every time we have a band come, I’m reminded how awesome it is that we get to have events like this,” he said.

Shah was also touched by the community of students and alumni that came together for the show.

“It was also cool for me to see all the familiar faces that you see at all these kinds of similar events and to feel like we have this community of people who love music and want to support this kind of stuff,” he added.

It was a particularly special community this past Saturday night, as former WRMC DJs attended an annual event they had formerly organized themselves. They also hosted radio shows throughout the day, which were organized by the current WRMC executive board.

Margaux Joly ’27, WRMC’s social media manager, reflected on what the radio community means to her and how she envisions it will continue beyond her time at Middlebury. It was the first club community that she joined during her first year, thanks to their welcoming, outgoing and creative presence on campus.

“I’ve been able to form new friendships and spend time with people that I maybe

COURTESY PHOTOS / BORAN PANG

WRMC’s annual spring concert and 75th anniversary welcomed campus band Soop Spoons and Pennsylvania Indie-Rock band Remember Sports this past Saturday.

"DOPAMINE": WHERE PLEASURE MEETS PERCEPTION

By **ELLIE TRINKLE**
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

John McShea '25 debuted his visual art collection "Dopamine" to an intimate crowd of friends and supporters on April 4. The paintings are complex explorations into how different sources of pleasure affect personal memory and nostalgia.

"It's all about how you interact with certain dopamine sources and the level of performance in relation to them. Dopamine is a learning drug, not a pleasure drug, so in a way we learn how to direct our attention based off of those things. So each painting is a progression of that level of performance in nature," McShea said at the show opening.

McShea organized the show in an attempt to challenge himself to paint more and to push himself creatively. He completed about half of the featured works within the last year, and half in the two weeks leading up to the show.

The paintings were displayed on two floors in the Johnson Memorial Building atrium, allowing McShea to take viewers on a journey through different depictions of pleasure. The lower level was considered the "outside the body" section, and featured paintings where McShea was an observer. The paintings played with distortion, reimagining the photos he referenced in a more playful and colorful way. The paintings on this floor were all inspired by candid photos he had taken of his friends that he found particularly striking.

One painting featured on the lower level was in imitation of a picture of his friends from back home in Seattle. The two sit on a dock in front of a bright blue sky. One wears a crown and holds a joint, while the other holds a slice of pizza. Both look at the object they are holding, indicating where they derive pleasure from. The "outside of the body" section was a showcase of meticulous brush strokes and intimate scenery.

"So now you're inside the body," explained McShea as he guided the crowd to the upper level of the exhibit. "The floor is red. You're kind of in a river of blood. The walls are tense. You're kind of in the skin. You feel a little bit more claustrophobic up here."

In the "inside the body" section, McShea experimented with themes of impermanence. A memorable piece was a double portrait where McShea recreated photos from John F. Kennedy's (JFK) autopsy. Though the image of JFK's exploded brain is grotesque, there is a strange peacefulness on his face that grounds the painting. McShea's use of different shades of yellows and whites depicts the decay of human flesh. The deep reds used to paint the exploded brain seem to melt into the black background, reinforcing that death is a natural part of life.

"Thinking about the idea of the flesh and the body and impermanence, JFK is such a figure of youth and one of those people who literally died young, so we never saw old JFK. So I thought that was interesting to anchor the rest of these pieces in," McShea said.

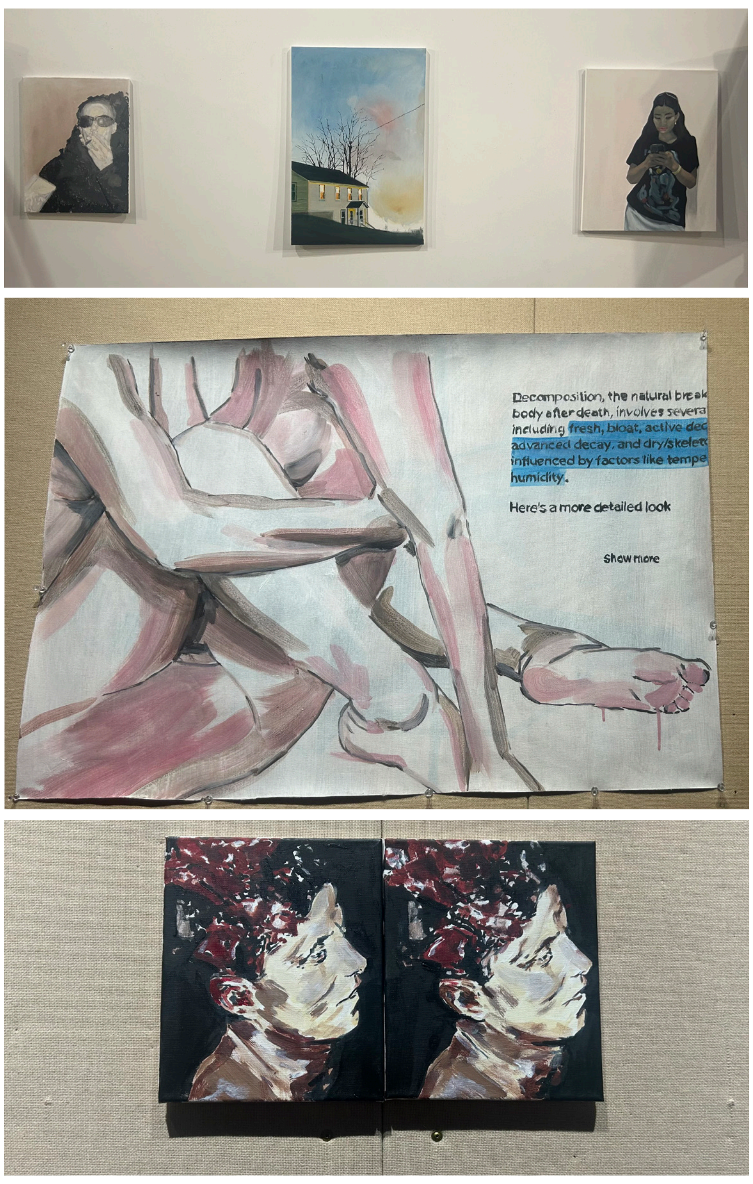
Other paintings on this floor expressed similar ideas through their depictions of nudity and sexuality. These increasingly explicit and "grotesque" paintings were more obscured, and experimented with emphasizing some parts of the body while opting for a more ambiguous representation of others. Though we were looking at these paintings from an outside perspective, the uneasiness they evoked felt personal, and contributed to the overall "claustrophobic" feel of the floor. This was all intentional on McShea's part, who challenged himself to explore how he could manipulate viewer reactions through different visual choices.

"I can make you uncomfortable with 10 strokes, I can manipulate how you feel, how you react, what you connotate, with such few pieces of information. So even though I'm trying to argue this thing is impermanent, all this sort of stuff, I can kind of manipulate it in a way that makes you uncomfortable," McShea said.

Another painting on this floor featured two bodies enveloped in one another, with a definition of the word "decompose" written next to them. Their flesh is mainly pink, evoking a freshness, but the accents of gray suggest they are slowly starting to lose their vitality as they verge on decomposition. The definition on the side includes the words "show more," which is normally a button included in an online Google definition. Here however, the meaning appears to go deeper. Though the figures are naked, there is still more they can "show," an intimacy that transcends the physical state of being, remaining even as the body begins to decompose.

The final painting in the exhibit was of McShea's three friends sitting on a couch, only their bodies were completely undefined. Instead, they were amorphous white shapes with a few details drawn with pencil. McShea believed this to be a hopeful ending to the collection, showing how even when the body is not explicitly depicted, its presence can still be felt.

"Most of these are memories of my life experiences that I remember extremely fondly. And so through that, I don't feel that feeling of nostalgia is negative. I know that my body will never be as young as it was, but I don't really feel sad about it. The body's still there," McShea said.

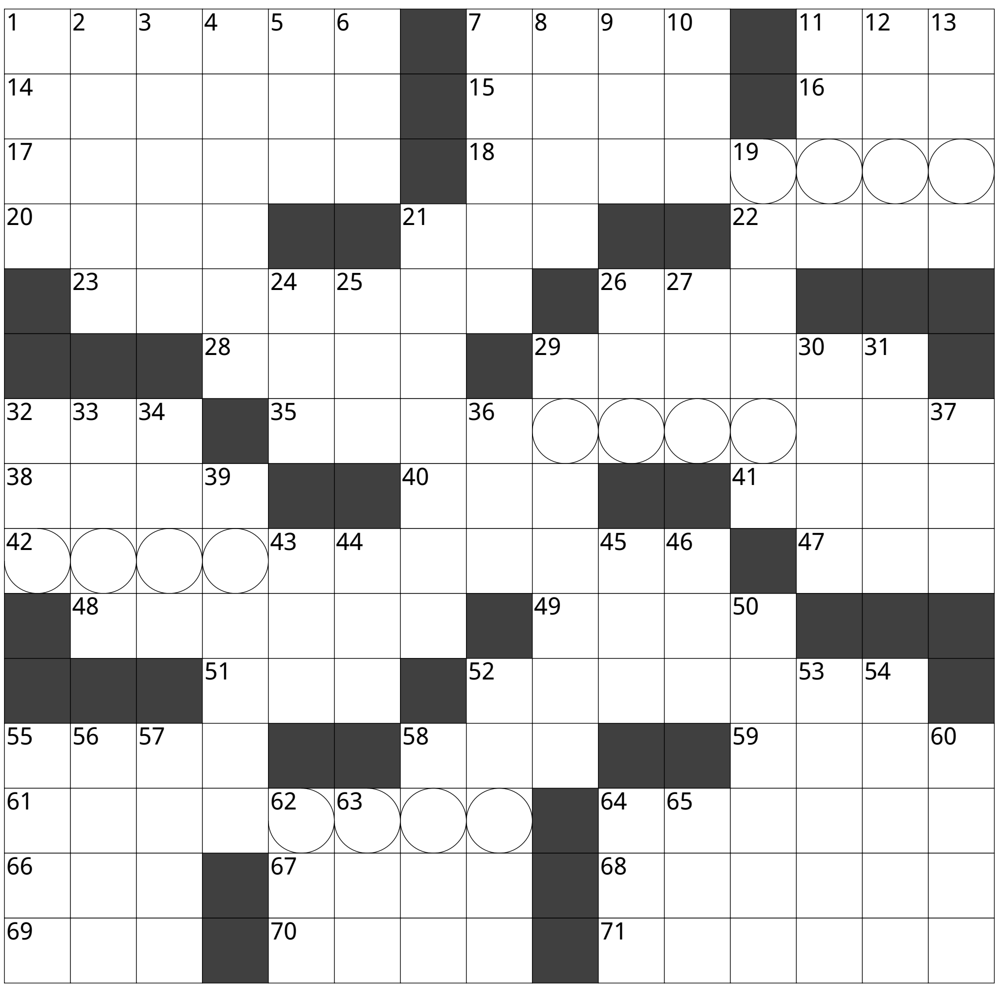

Decomposition, the natural break
body after death, involves severa
including fresh, bloat, active dec
advanced decay, and dry/skelet
influenced by factors like tempe
humidity.
Here's a more detailed look
Show more

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / ELLIE TRINKLE

John McShea's "Dopamine" displayed in the atrium of the Johnson Memorial Building this past weekend.

Seder Time

Josh Harkins



ACROSS

1 Gets away from
7 Ski lift option
11 'Fire' or 'dope,' in slang
14 Jewish holiday starting on Saturday whose English name is a hint to the starred clues
15 European automaker
16 Consumed
17 Break after odd numbered game in tennis (throw)
18 Meticulously search (catch)
20 Shoots (for)
21 Chicago WNBA squad
22 Pack (down)
23 Noxious odors
26 Snitch
28 Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, for two
29 "The Crown" actress Bonham Carter
32 Get healthy again (throw)
35 Frisbee golfers, say (catch)
38 Laugh line
40 Oilers on NHL scoreboards
41 Tale of a long journey
42 Accurate (catch)
47 American pastry akin to Yorkshire pudding (throw)
48 Surplus
49 European automaker
51 Apple phone software, for short
52 Spread quickly, online
55 Family group
58 In support
59 Tarbell and McKinley, for two
61 Put up, as a painting (catch)
64 Make poor (throw)
66 Choose
67 Bell sound
68 Former Speaker of the House Nancy
69 Some ER visits
70 Simplicity
71 Tiniest drink

DOWN

1 Humane letters?
2 Pronoun pair
3 "Me too"
4 State with highest point at Mount Sunflower, which isn't actually a mountain
5 Hosp. readout
6 "That's all ___ wrote!"
7 Poster keeper-uppers
8 Harbor marker
9 USN bigwig
10 Give a hard time
11 Volcano product
12 Couple
13 Maryland athlete
19 Animals that hold hands while sleeping in the sea
21 Smart alecks
24 Comedian Caesar
25 Hosp. scan
26 Gun
27 Ginger ___
29 "___ the holidays," something many people hope to be
30 Kind of tide
31 2012 Best Picture Oscar recipient
32 Letter following pi
33 Roof overhang
34 ___ Mix
36 9-D subordinate
37 Exhaust
39 Like many a basketball shot
43 C-suite exec.
44 CIA predecessor
45 Strategy game series whose VII-th version was released in February
46 Mai ___
50 Rarest hit in baseball
52 Narrow canyon
53 "See ya!" in Sevilla
54 Yoghurt drink that the author loves, especially when mango-flavored
55 Child's word for a train, when doubled
56 Org. in "Die Hard"
57 Unwelcome picnic guests
58 Marshy areas
60 Boat, but bigger
62 Many a Byron poem
63 By way of
64 Wall Street debut, for short
65 "It's Raining ___"

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH SABRINA KIM ’25, WOMEN’S ICE HOCKEY

By **BROOKE FRIBERG**
Sports Editor

Sabrina Kim ’25, originally from Los Angeles, California, is a defender for the Middlebury Women’s Hockey team. Recently, Kim was named to the New England Hockey Writers Association Division III All-Star Team and earned AHCA/CCM All-American East First-Team Laurels. During her time at Middlebury, she played in 113 games and brought in an impressive 71 career points (8G, 63A).

Brooke Friberg: When did you first start playing hockey, and how has your relationship with the sport changed over time?

Sabrina Kim: I started playing hockey at the age of eight, which was considered a bit late, as I initially pursued figure skating with the dream of competing in the Olympics. However, managing two different sports with different schedules became difficult for my parents since my brother played hockey. Ultimately, my family made the decision that either he would switch to figure skating or I would switch to hockey. Therefore, I left figure skating behind and became a hockey player. At first, it was a tough transition, but over time, I grew to love the sport. Hockey was not popular for girls back then in California, but looking back and seeing how the sport has grown, I’m incredibly proud of the decision I made. Hockey has taken me to places I never imagined, from boarding school at Choate to college at Middlebury. More than that, it has introduced me to some of my closest friends and given me experiences I wouldn’t trade for anything. Through the highs and lows, the victories and challenges, hockey has shaped me into who I am today. It has taught me resilience, mental toughness, discipline, and the importance of teamwork. For that, I am forever grateful.

BF: How did you end up at Middlebury? What made you choose it, and has your experience been different than expected?

SK: When I was at Choate, I was introduced to NESCAC schools, which I hadn’t even heard of growing up in California. I was drawn to the idea of attending a college with a similar atmosphere, one that valued both academics and athletics while allowing students to explore their personal identities. As I started conversations with NESCAC coaches and a few other schools outside the [NESCAC], I realized I wanted to go somewhere that truly wanted me as an athlete and a student. When Middlebury was the first school to call on commitment day, it felt like the right choice. My experience at Middlebury has been everything I hoped for and more. Living in Vermont has shaped me in ways I never expected, and I’ve had the privilege of being surrounded by some of the most amazing people. The sense of community here reminds me of what I loved about Choate—tight-knit, supportive, and filled with opportunities to grow. I’ve been able to join and lead clubs, explore new interests, and form friendships that will last a lifetime. The faculty and staff are just as incredible, always encouraging students to succeed. It’s been an unforgettable journey.

BF: You recently officially completed your career as a Midd hockey player — what will you miss most about the program?

SK: Without a doubt, I’ll miss the people the most — my teammates, the coaching staff, and the entire Middlebury hockey community. There’s nothing like stepping onto the ice with a group that feels like family, pushing each other every day to be better. Being part of a team on campus brings a built-in support system, a second family, and memories that will last forever. I’ll also miss the feeling of playing competitive hockey at such a high level — working toward a shared goal, celebrating wins, and overcoming challenges together. The camaraderie, the energy, and the sense of belonging that come with being part of this program are truly special.

COURTESY PHOTO / CARL LYNCH

Defender Sabrina Kim ‘25 Kim has played in all 113 games that Middlebury has competed in over her four years.

BF: How do you think you impacted the team as a senior, and how did your teammates impact you and your final season?

SK: As a senior, I focused on fostering an environment where everyone felt welcome and supported. I wanted to create a space where my teammates could compete at their highest level, while also feeling valued and encouraged. More than anything, I hope I helped build a culture of respect, camaraderie, and competitiveness. At the same time, my teammates impacted me just as much, if not more. Their dedication, passion, and energy reminded me every day why I love this sport. They pushed me to be a better player and a better leader. My final season was special because of them, and I wouldn’t trade those memories for anything.

BF: What has been your favorite team tradition or memory?

SK: One of my favorite team traditions is bus karaoke. It’s a hilarious and slightly nerve-wracking moment when each player has to sing a random song in front of the whole team, with headphones on, so you can’t hear yourself. It’s chaotic, it’s embarrassing, but it’s the best and funniest tradition we have. As for my favorite memory, winning the national championship my freshman year is something I’ll never forget. Going undefeated was an incredible feat, something I never thought was possible, but we made it happen. That season, that championship, and the journey to get there will always be one of my proudest moments.

BF: Do you have any pre-game rituals, or a hype song?

SK: Before every game, I always head to the training room to see my trainer, Shelby, and also to unwind and chat with athletes from other teams. It’s always part of my routine. I’ll get heat, cupping, or scraping done, but more than that, it’s a space to reset and get in the zone, see familiar faces and catch up before I tune in for my game. As for my favorite hype song — my teammates would probably guess this — is always going to be The Days (Notion Remix). It’s always at the top of my queue.

BF: What’s your go-to study spot on campus?

SK: You can usually find me in either [Johnson Memorial Building] or at Crossroads Cafe. As an architecture major, Johnson eventually becomes your second home. You spend countless hours working on projects, so it’s where I’m most productive. When I’m not buried in design work, I love studying at Crossroads. The atmosphere is relaxed, and it’s a great place to catch up with friends. Plus, a lot of my friends are baristas there, so I always enjoy stopping by when they’re working.

PANTHERS ON THE PROWL: MEN’S TRACK & FIELD BUILDING MOMETUM FOR A NESCAC CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

By **TING CUI**
Senior Sports Editor

The Middlebury men’s track and field team has been rewriting the record books this season, and the whispers around the NESCAC are growing louder — the Panthers might just be on the verge of claiming their first conference championship in six years.

With a program-record six All-American selections after the NCAA Indoor Championships and a string of broken school records, Head Coach Martin Beatty’s squad is a dark horse for the Championship title as they prepare for the crucial stretch of their outdoor season.

“Every year we’ve always said, ‘this is the year,’ but this is the year now,” hurdler Josiah Durfee ’25 said. “We last won in 2018-2019 [season]... it’s really just like the glory days. All the seniors on the team, my class, have gone through three years of disappointment, and I think we’re really ready to give it our all this last time.”

The Panthers’ impressive fourth-place finish at the Division III Indoor New England Championships, where they tallied 70.33 points behind powerhouses Amherst, MIT and Tufts, showed that this team has the firepower to compete at the highest level.

“This is the strongest team we’ve ever had,” said senior jumper and co-captain Sam McGarrahan ’25.5. “Our senior class has been kind of looking forward to this — we always thought we had a very strong class, and this is kind of our chance to show it.”

The Panthers’ rise has been fueled by an unprecedented wave of All-Americans and record-breaking performances. In the indoor season alone, six school records fell as the team showcased its remarkable range of talent.

Freshman sprinter and Second-Team All American Donnell Harvey Jr. ’28 has been a sensation, setting and resetting the program’s 60-meter dash record with a blistering 6.80 seconds at the Tufts National Qualifying Meet. Senior thrower Dan Urchuk ’25 was equally dominant there, breaking the school shot put record with a heave of 15.51 meters. The distance crew, traditionally the program’s backbone, continues to excel with Drew Donahue ’25 breaking his own 3,000m record, which he set back in 2022.

The Distance Medley Relay (DMR) Team of Zach Uts, Emerson Kingston, Will Lavey, and Donahue earned First-Team All American honors — not done since 2019 when they won the event at the NESCAC Championships.

Ziggy Goddard ’25 has also established himself as one of the division’s premier middle-distance runners, earning first-team All-American honors in the mile and posting the second-best time in the 3,000 steeplechase (9:24.20) at the Aztec Invitational.

Not to be outdone, the jumpers have raised the bar literally and figuratively. Sam McGarrahan smashed the program’s high jump record, clearing an impressive 2.05m — a record he set himself earlier this season at the Middlebury Snowflake Invitational. Meanwhile, Sam Opawuyi ’27 rewrote the school’s triple jump record with a massive 13.93m leap at the Aztec Invitational.

“I was able to go to Nationals during indoor season, which was kind of beyond my college goals,” McGarrahan said of his record-breaking high jump performance. “Our jumpers are such a unique group. Sam Opawuyi was able to beat the school record a couple weeks ago in the triple jump, which he’s been dying to do.”

At the start of the season, Caleb Smith ’27 also broke his school record in the heptathlon with 4.953 points at a home meet. He claimed first in the multi event at the Indoor Championships.

COURTESY PHOTO / STOCKTON PHOTO

Sam McGarrahan ‘25 set a new program record with a clearance of 2.05 meters in the high jump. The men’s track and field team has broken a number of school records this season.

Also worthy of a men tryout is the Panthers’ hurdle squad. This group has transformed from a small, specialized group into one of the team’s secret weapons. The evolution of the squad can be seen through senior Xander Swann ’25, who was named NESCAC Men’s Track Athlete of the Week after posting a personal-best 52.54 in the 400-meter hurdles at the Aztec Invitational — finishing ahead of multiple Division I competitors.

Suffice to say, there is incredible depth to the team this season.

Behind the scenes, the Panthers attribute much of their rise to a stellar recruitment effort that has brought elite talent to Middlebury across all class years. The culture established by head coach Martin Beatty, and his specialized coaching staff, have turned a collection of talented athletes into a unified force with a shared mission.

“I feel like Coach Martin’s unspoken pillar that he rests the team on is friendship and a sense of community,” McGarrahan said. “He’s not trying to build a team. He’s trying to build a group of like 100 friends.”

With the NESCAC Championships looming on April 26 at Wesleyan University, the anticipation within the program is brewing. The Panthers have positioned themselves for what could be a historic championship run, ready to challenge the conference’s established powers. According to the team, Amherst and Tufts pose significant challenges.

If the Panthers can maintain their current trajectory and stay healthy, the program’s first NESCAC title since 2019 appears within reach — a fitting culmination for a season already defined by record-breaking performances and achievements.

“It really just comes down to what you can do the day of, and the people that you have around you to support you through it,” McGarrahan said.

For a program that has consistently finished in the top 10 at the New England Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championship for seven consecutive seasons, this year’s squad appears ready to take that final step, decisive step from contender to champion.

THE SIDE HUSTLE: STUDENT-LED WOMEN'S ULTIMATE FRISBEE TEAM BUILDS NATIONAL DYNASTY

By THEO MANIATIS
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO / MATTHEW BROOKS

The Middleury Women's Ultimate Frisbee Team has won three out of the last four Division III Championships.

The sport of frisbee can be traced back to Middlebury College students in the fall of 1939. The story goes that a group of brothers from Delta Upsilon — Middlebury still had fraternities at this time — were traveling to a fraternity convention in Nebraska, devouring Frisbie Fruit Pies in the car. When finished, they tossed the leftover pie tin to one another while waiting for a flat tire to be repaired.

What began as simple pie tin tosses evolved after World War II. In 1948, Walter Fred Morrison, a West Coast inventor and building inspector, created plastic versions marketed as "flying saucers." By 1957, Wham-O Manufacturing Company purchased Morrison's design and, after discovering the popularity of a campus game called "Frisbie" during market research, began selling the discs under the registered trademark "Frisbee."

In the 1980s, the debate over frisbee's origins became contentious, with Yale University, among others, claiming authorship of the game. To quell the controversy, Middlebury's president at the time, Olin Robinson, commissioned Patrick Farrow to create a bronze sculpture of a dog catching a flying disc in its mouth, which still stands proudly on Battell Beach.

Middlebury stopped throwing pie tins in 1977, when the Middlebury Pranksters Ultimate Frisbee Club was founded. Nearly 50 years later, the Women's Ultimate Frisbee team has made a name for itself on the national stage. They've won three out of the past four D3 national championships. Last year, they made it to the semi-finals in a rebuild year.

The team, made up of around 25 players, calls itself the Pranksters. Despite being one of the most successful teams on campus, they like to keep things fun and free-spirited.

"We are on a mission to be competitive that is facilitated by love and fun and great chemistry," Claire Rhyneer '26 told The Campus. "It's a pretty eclectic group of people, extremely fun — like work hard, play hard. I think we're unafraid to be weird on campus. We are an extremely competitive team, and we are trying to mesh fun and seriousness at the same time."

Unlike other programs, the Pranksters don't wear uniforms to most of their tournaments. When they reach the postseason, they're required to wear them because otherwise it's not "serious."

"Well, we've just won the past three championships," Rhyneer declared. "We are completely serious about this." It's a testament to their confidence that they can reject conventional trappings of competitive sports while still dominating the league.

Another thing the Pranksters do without — a coach. The three captains run all the practices.

"We don't have a coach," said co-captain Liz Crawford '25. "And I think there's a lot to be said for intrinsic motivation and autonomy in that."

Most dominant teams in history are defined by a great coach, such as Geno Auriemma, whose UConn basketball team notched its 12th NCAA women's championship this past Sunday. But that's not the case with the Pranksters.

The player-led coaching fosters a different kind of motivation.

"We show up and play and want to put in the effort just for the team and for each other," Crawford said. "I think that that harbors a really competitive and driven environment that a lot of other teams don't necessarily have because they're driven by a coach telling them what to do."

However, there are certain downsides to the Pranksters not having a coach. It's a full-time job for the captains to plan practices, take care of travel logistics and scramble to raise funds so they can afford to go to Nationals.

The Pranksters also receive limited funding from the school. Since frisbee is not a varsity sport, they do not have access to a personal trainer, and the players cannot access the athlete gym. They also have to work around varsity teams when scheduling their practices.

"It starts to feel really frustrating when we're trying to be competitive, train really hard, and there's no recognition from this school that we should be housed under athletics rather than a student organization," Rhyneer said.

Miraculously, the Pranksters have made their unorthodox situation work. They practice three to four times weekly as a team and do conditioning on their own once a week. When traveling to tournaments, they drive their own cars or pay for their own flight tickets. Despite these challenges — or perhaps because of them — the Pranksters have forged unbreakable bonds that translate into chemistry on the field.

As expected, the team will be back challenging for a championship this year. They have a strong group with experienced winners, but also talented underclassmen like Ella Widmyer '28.5, a first year who plays for the U-24 US National Team.

The Pranksters are already off to a roaring start this season after winning the Northeast Classic. This weekend they will play in sectionals, the first step on the path to Nationals, which will be held in Seattle. That flight across the country won't be cheap – it's $400 per person, which will mostly come out of the players' pockets.

The Pranksters carry on a proud Middlebury legacy that dates back to those first pie tin tosses in 1939. Despite their success — three national championships in four years — they continue to self-fund, self-coach and self-organize.

The bronze statue on Battell Beach commemorates where the sport began. Perhaps it's time for the college to honor where these dedicated athletes have taken it. The Pranksters have proven themselves on the national stage; now they deserve to be recognized as the champions they are at home.

MEN'S GOLF FALTERS IN FIRST SPRING TOURNAMENT

By KANAN CLIFFORD
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO / DAVID ZHAO

Logan Wang '27 competed with the men's golf team at their season opener the Trinity Bantam/Hartford Hawks Invitation in Connecticut.

In 2015, Spiethsanity rocked the golf world. As the 21-year-old golf prodigy Jordan Spieth won two major championships and five tournaments overall, fans and players alike marveled at the PGA Tour Player of the Year. Middlebury men's golf had their own Spieth-like run in the 2022–23 season, winning the NESCAC championship by 15 strokes – their first title since 2015–16.

But in the way of Speith's success streak came the 2016 Masters Tournament. Spieth held the lead going into Sunday but proceeded to card a quadruple bogey on the water-lined 15 hole. Since that day, he has never quite regained the confidence and success of his magical 2015 season, yet remains dear in the hearts of all golf fans.

Similarly, Middlebury men's golf has fallen into a rut of underperformance over the last two years. This past weekend, the Panthers shot a combined 55-over-par, with zero rounds under 80 on the first day of the tournament. They limped back home in 12th place, with the lone bright spot being a T-19 finish from Brendan Maykel '25, who closed the day with four birdies on the card.

The question now is: Was this weekend's performance a continuation of last season's poor play or the beginning of a comeback story? Will the 2023–24 metaphorical "quadruple bogey" remain as the status quo, or will this season see a resurgence in energy and motivation towards a strong finish in the NESCAC championship — rebounding just as Spieth has in his efforts to improve leading up to this years' Masters?

To answer these questions, I turned to Middlebury's men's golf coach, Justin Kumpulanian. Coach Kumpulanian began his Middlebury tenure in January 2024, coming from Williams College, where he was the assistant men's golf coach and a PGA professional at Taconic Golf Club.

To improve, Kumpulanian said, the team needs to put itself in a position to win.

"We should expect to contend, and expect to win," he told The Campus. The team needs to "fight to perform like [they] did at Taconic in the fall."

He is referring to the Williams Fall Invitational, where the Panthers stormed to a strong second place out of 19 teams.

Kumpulanian also shared how the players made some technical improvements over the winter break.

"The coaching staff sits down with each of the guys and makes individual plans based on what they need to work on," Kumpulanian said. He noted that across the board, the team needs to keep their shot dispersion small, especially with scoring irons (a term that includes wedges and short irons), and improve driving accuracy.

Charlie Schulman '26 echoed that sentiment, mentioning that the team often plays shorter, narrower, courses in the Northeast and thus must rely on wedge accuracy. Schulman, a holdover from that 2022–23 team, also stressed the importance of team chemistry, citing the group's recent spring break trip to Tennessee as a much-needed reintroduction to golf after a long winter, and as a way to connect with the underclassmen.

As Spieth tees it up at Augusta National Golf Club this weekend in search of his first major title in eight years, the Panthers begin their own high-stakes stretch. Panthers fans are hoping to see all the swing changes, chemistry-building and wedge practice come to fruition with a win at the NESCAC championship, ending their drought and putting men's golf back on the map.

The Panthers have two weekends of tournaments to tune up: this weekend in Ballston Spa, N.Y., and next weekend in Williamstown, Mass. before the NESCAC Championship at Taconic Golf Club from April 25–27.